

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

#### **Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A network for distributing information, between a central unit and stations, comprising:

information splitting devices with inputs/outputs connected to the central unit and to the stations, an interface device in each station,

wherein the interface device of each station is linked to a first splitting device and to a second splitting device by the interface device of at least one additional station, ~~and~~

wherein protocol exchanges between the central unit and the interface device are organized such that the central unit can determine whether a terminal is faulty, an interface is faulty, or the splitting device is faulty, and

wherein each splitting device is configured to support a higher bit rate than the nominal bit rate of the splitting device.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein plural interface devices are mounted in cascade on a link starting from a splitting device.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein an interface device comprises a means for detecting a fault relating to a problem on a link between this interface device and the first or the second splitting device.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 3, wherein the means for detecting faults comprises means for mutual acknowledgement with the central unit.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a device for switching over from the first splitting device to the second splitting device.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 5, wherein the switching device is in the central unit.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein a link between a splitting device and an interface device is effected with a cable having two twisted conductors.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein a splitting device is linked by a link connected to one of its inputs/outputs to a single special interface device, this special interface device being linked by another link connected to another input/output of another splitting device.

Claim 9 (Cancelled).

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein addresses used to identify elements of the network comprise fields of which a first field makes it possible to identify a group of stations connected to a splitting device identified by a second field and that a modification of a value of the second field makes it possible to connect the group of stations to another splitting device.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): A process for splitting the effects of a fault in a network for distributing information among terminals, wherein

N splitting devices are linked, according to a star topology, to a central unit with an aid of transport means over each of which a primary stream travels, to a splitting device of rank m corresponding to a primary stream  $FP_m$ ,

the splitting devices are furnished with first inputs/outputs  $A_1$  to  $A_i$  and with second inputs/outputs  $B_1$  to  $B_j$ ,

the first inputs/outputs  $A_1$  to  $A_i$  of a splitting device K are linked by buses  $K_1$  to  $K_i$  to the second inputs/outputs  $B_1$  to  $B_i$  of a consecutive splitting device  $K + 1$ , with  $1 \leq K \leq N$ ,

terminals are linked in cascade to each bus  $K_1$  to  $K_i$ ,

the first inputs/outputs  $A_1$  to  $A_i$  of the splitting devices 1 to N are activated,

upon a fault between a terminal linked by a splitting device K to the central unit, a first input/output  $A_1$  to  $A_i$  of the splitting device K is deactivated,

a second input/output  $B_1$  to  $B_i$  of the splitting device  $K + 1$  is activated.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein

upon an event relating to the splitting device K, the first inputs/outputs  $A_1$  to  $A_i$  of the splitting devices  $K + 1$  to N are deactivated,

the second inputs/outputs  $B_1$  to  $B_i$  of the splitting devices  $K + 1$  to N are activated.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein

upon a fault, some of the first inputs/outputs  $A_1$  to  $A_i$  of the splitting device  $K + 1$  are activated.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein

upon another event relating to a splitting device  $K \pm n$ , a number of first inputs/outputs and a number of second inputs/outputs to be activated for each of a number of devices available between the splitting devices  $K$  and  $K \pm n$  are determined as a function of these available devices, this number being different by one unit at most between two available devices,

inputs/outputs thus determined from among the inputs/outputs  $A_1$  to  $A_i$  and or  $B_1$  to  $B_i$  are activated.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A network for distributing information, between a central unit and stations, comprising:

information splitting devices with inputs/outputs connected to the central unit and to the stations, each station includes an interface device,

wherein the interface device of each station is linked to a first splitting device and to a second splitting device via an interface device of at least one additional station, ~~and~~

wherein plural interface devices are mounted in cascade on a link starting from a splitting device, and

wherein each splitting device is configured to support a higher bit rate than the nominal bit rate of the splitting device.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein an interface device comprises a means for detecting a fault relating to a problem on a link between this interface device and the first or the second splitting device.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 16, wherein the means for detecting faults comprises means for mutual acknowledgement with the central unit.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, further comprising a device for switching over from the first splitting device to the second splitting device.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 18, wherein the switching device is in the central unit.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein a link between a splitting device and an interface device is effected with a cable having two twisted conductors.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein a splitting device is linked by a link connected to one of its inputs/outputs to a single special interface device, this special interface device being linked by another link connected to another input/output of another splitting device.

Claim 22 (Cancelled).

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein addresses used to identify elements of the network comprise fields of which a first field makes it possible to identify a group of stations connected to a splitting device identified by a

second field and that a modification of a value of the second field makes it possible to connect the group of stations to another splitting device.

Claim 24 (New): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein the splitting device is capable of supporting a bit rate of two times a nominal bit rate of the splitting device.

Claim 25 (New): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein the splitting device is capable of supporting a bit rate of two times a nominal bit rate of the splitting device.